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# DANTE

A DRAMA





Compliments of

J. F. W. O'Connor, S. J.



# DANTE

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## A DRAMA

*John Francis O'Connor*  
BY J. F. X. O'CONOR, S. J.,

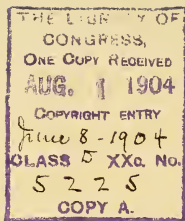
Professor of Dante and Philosophy in St. Joseph's College, Philadelphia.

Author of "Reading and the Mind," "Cuneiform Inscriptions,"

"Sacred Scenes and Mysteries," "Facts About Bookworms," etc.

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## PREFACE

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THE play was written to show in some little measure the nobility of the character of the great Catholic Poet and immortal Florentine, Dante.

This is the noble Dante whom scholars and students and poets have known and loved ; the high minded, intellectual and spiritual being who lays bare the sins of Hell, and the purification of Purgatory, and reflects the teaching of St. Thomas in his sublime portrayal of Paradise. How truly the great soul of Dante puts to scorn “the wishes of some little minds” to drag his greatness down !

The play was written in collaboration with the Dante class, and if it but give a nobler idea of Dante its work will have been done.

THE AUTHOR





DANTE

From a bronze bust at Naples.





## “DANTE”

O, Noble Florentine, of undying fame,  
Who gavest unto thy city, and, as well  
To Beatrice, thy love, and who through Hell  
And Purgatory and Heaven thy name  
Did'st bear, and who e'er held it bitter shame  
That Florence should the tale of scorn e'er tell  
How she had cast thee forth. All hearts rebel  
That greatness, sorrow, love, should bear such blame.  
O, gentle poet, great and true, 'tis meet  
That we in distant ages far, should come  
To lay our humble tribute at thy feet,  
And beg that thou would'st look with kindly eyes  
Upon our efforts, made to fitly greet  
Thee ! O Dante ! Poet of Life and Paradise !



## DANTE.

All people have ever been eager to sound the praise of a great man, be he poet, statesman, or warrior. But it is the poet particularly that claims the love and admiration, not of his own countrymen merely, but even of the world. Homer and Virgil are names famous for centuries in civilized lands and their glory shall never grow dim. Dante is the poet of the Christian world ; nay, more, of the human race.

That some men of genius should despise or underrate him is not wonderful, when we consider the poet and his work. Dante has been styled the "Moralist." He speaks to the heart and that to direct it in its duty according to the natural law and the Church's guidance. But for professed admirers of the poet to so distort him as to make him beneath the ordinary moral standard seems a paradox. This appears to be the case in a play presented in this country and abroad some months ago. Ostensibly, the moral character of Dante was to be depicted. It was so offensively done, and at the same time so wrongly done, as to drive the piece from the stage and not add lustre to a great actor's reputation.

A native of the city next to Rome, in the whole world, famous for art, learning and its high grade of culture, Dante had all the advantages of the moral influence of environment upon character and genius. Besides this, if we consider natural disposition and talent and great assiduity, we can imagine what progress he must have made in the liberal arts.

Moreover, unlike most men of speculative tendencies, he passed his whole life in the most active pursuits in domestic and state affairs and hence had a very wide intercourse with men and knew them thoroughly. Splendidly trained in the broadening and yet subtle success of philosophy and theology, together with an ardent temperament, a vast knowledge, unlimited experience and all the other advantages mentioned above, he was well fitted to teach his fellow men. Though the simplest of his fellows can read him with profit, the acutest and most learned cannot fully fathom him.

Add to his originality, his wonderful exposition of the whole history and destiny of mankind and that not only in the most poetic manner but also in the most scientific and orthodox way, we have a poet truly surpassing even the laurel-crowned bards of yore.

It has been said that no one has ever yet fully known Dante. If this is so, after six centuries of study, the man's genius is certainly marvelous. Dante was of a noble and proud spirit and it was owing to these qualities in his character that he had to suffer so much

from his political enemies. Though a great student, he was moreover extremely active in politics and, according to all the reliable records of the time, he was eminent also in oratory, a fact that accounts for his being sent on so many embassies of importance.

Though at one time an ardent party man, his exile seems to have made him cosmopolitan in his desire of benefiting mankind. Ever eager to espouse the cause of the oppressed, laboring throughout his life for the good of his fellow beings, and powerful in his aid and defense, he was, ever during his life, no less praised for his philanthropy than for his genius.

### BEATRICE.

Dante Alighieri was born in May, 1265, and died on the night of the 13th of September, 1321, at the age of fifty-six years.

He first saw Beatrice at the home of her father when each was about the age of nine, and though she died in 1290, sixteen years later, his love for her, idealized, lived through his poems, and breathes forth the most exquisitely pure affection and devotion that has ever been expressed by a human mind.

### GUELPH AND Ghibelline.

Dante took an active part in public life, and with the Guelphs fought against the Ghibellines. The Guelphs were the defenders of Italian independence and municipal liberties—the Ghibellines were champions of feudal rights and the old suzerainty of the Holy Empire.

In 1300 Dante was for a short time one of the Priori of the Republic, the ruling powers of Florence. Two powers had been formed, the Neri—the nobles, and the Bianchi—the plebeians.

His sympathy for the Bianchi won him the enmity of the Neri. The Neri obtained control of Florence after their return from banishment and exiled Dante in 1302. After many wanderings he reached Ravenna, where, as the guest of Guido Novello da Polenta, he died in 1321. His family traditions and his own inclinations seemed to attach him to the Guelphs, says Ozanam, and, when disappointed hope left him no other resource, if he seemed to pass into the camp of the Ghibellines, it was because he thought there to find that very cause of liberty to aid which he had fought against them. The names of Guelph and Ghibelline had several times changed meaning in the course of intestine struggles. Dante said of both, "'Tis hard to see which sins the most.'

### DANTE'S WRITINGS.

Dante was contemporary of Guido Cavalcanti, Cino da Pistoia, Jacopo de Todi, Dante da Mojano, men filled with a poetic spirit, and of the musician Casella, and the painter Giotto.

In Dante's genius were united "intellect to perceive, imagination to idealize and will to execute."

Dante's works include, beside the *Divina Commedia*, the *Rime*, the *Vita Nuova*, *De Monarchia*, *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, the *Convito* or *Banquet*.

## THE DIVINA COMMEDIA.

The *Divina Commedia* was moulded on the customs of the period, and examples taken from the whole of past poetry. "The whole work," says Jacopo di Dante, his son, "is divided into three parts, of which the first is named Hell, the second Purgatory, the third and last, Paradise." The first treats of vice, the second of the transition of vice to virtue, and the third of men made perfect.

The greatness of the soul of Dante will find an answering echo in every human heart. As to the character of the poem, Dante says in a letter to Can Grande della Scala: "The sense of this work is not simple but, on the contrary, one may say manifold . . . . The first is called literal, the second allegorical or moral . . . . The subject then of the whole work, taken literally, is the condition of souls after death, simply considered, for within and around this the whole action of the work turns. But if the work be taken allegorically, the subject is man, how by actions of merit or demerit, through freedom of the will, he justly deserves reward or punishment."

Taking the first Canto of the *Inferno* as a prelude, each part, *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, *Paradiso*, consists of thirty-three Cantos—ninety-nine in all.

The divisions are described by Dante in the eleventh Canto.

The divisions of sins in Dante's Hell have been a subject of much controversy. The primary division is based upon Aristotle: I. Incontinence. II. Brutishness or Bestiality. III. Malice or Vice. The Nine Circles of Hell would be after the Trimmers: 1. The Heathen or Unbaptised. 2. Carnal Sinners. 3. Gluttonous. 4. Avaricious. 5. The Angry. 6. Heretics. 7. Violent. 8. Hypocrites. 9. Traitors.

The violent are sub-divided, into violent against: 1. Neighbor. 2. Self. 3. God.

The Simple Malice is divided into: 1. Seducers. 2. Flatterers. 3. Simonists. 4. Diviners. 5. Peculators. 6. Hypocrites. 7. Thieves. 8. Evil Counsellors. 9. Sowers of Dissension. 10. Forgers.

Treacherous Malice against: 1. Kin. 2. Country. 3. Hospitality. 4. Benefactors.

"The Divina Commedia" is a visionary pilgrimage through the three kingdoms of the other world, from the dwelling of Lucifer to the throne of God, and theology is at the root of all that the poet encounters in his journey, whether by fear, sorrow or joy. Philosophy, astronomy, politics, history, ancient mythology and mediæval legend are all interwoven in his many-colored web. One chief and fascinating element of interest in the poem is, indeed, that it presents to us, idealized, the whole culture of the mediæval Christian world, when it had attained its perfection and its epoch was to close. And it was theology again which gave order and unity to this varied wealth and material; and Dante but speaks the truth when he calls his work "The sacred poem that hath made both Heaven and earth co-partners in its toil." (Par. xxv, 1.)

Contemporary witness to the theological merit of the poem is furnished in the first line of Dante's epitaph, which declares him "master of dogmatic lore." In 1350, within thirty years of his death, his picture was exposed in the church of St. Stephen's, near the Ponte Vecchio, at Florence, and honored with semi-religious reverence, and his poem was expounded there and in other churches. The Vatican itself accords him rank as a theologian.

In Raphael's "Disputa" the most thoughtful of all his creations, amongst Popes, Cardinals, religious, fathers and doctors of the church, by the altar, where reposes the Most Holy, stands Dante with his laurel wreath.

In truth he anticipated the most pregnant developments of Christian doctrine, mastered its subtlest distinctions, and treated its hardest problems with almost faultless accuracy. Were all the libraries in the world destroyed, and the Holy Scriptures with them, the whole Catholic system of doctrine and morals might be almost reconstructed out of the "Divina Commedia."

"At Ravenna, in 1857, Pius IX. placed a wreath on his tomb as a witness to his Catholic loyalty and faith." Preface to Hettinger's *Divina Commedia*.

Hettinger—Dante's *Divina Commedia*, pp. 233, 234.

In politics, philosophy and theology, Dante is essentially Catholic and orthodox, and yet is claimed as an advocate of scepticism and revolution. The poet was not a saint, but an erring and fallible man; pride and hate were, as he himself says, his two chief faults, and Dr. Hettinger has no wish to paint him aught but what he is. By his exile he was embittered against the French party in Italy, and especially against Boniface VIII., under whose authority the French at that time preferred to act.

Hettinger says "if reliable authorities be consulted we think

that it would be found that Dante has assailed with calumnies some of the Church's most holy rulers, and has met with singular leniency in return. . . . We think the Holy See's treatment of the poet is that of a wise and generous parent who will not allow the storm of passion in an erring child to influence her recognition and approval of his truer and better nature. . . . And thus the *Divina Commedia*, notwithstanding these serious blots, remains substantially a magnificent exposition of the Catholic faith. It has been studied and extolled by theologians and Popes."

### DANTE'S CHARACTER.

Boccaccio relates that "after he had humbly and devoutly received all the last holy sacraments according to the rites of the Church, and had made his peace with God, he gave back his weary soul to his Creator on the 14th of September, being the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, to the great grief of Guido and the people of Ravenna.

"Thus died Dante. Measured by man's standard he was unfortunate from his youth upwards. He lost his first love; his services to his country were ill requited; he himself, accused of fraud and imposture, was condemned to be burnt; an exile, poor and friendless, he wandered in foreign lands. But he was never untrue to himself; he never lost faith in his ideal, nor was false to his principles; nor did he ever cease to love and to labor for his country, for science, for freedom and religion. Guido Novello himself pronounced the funeral oration at Ravenna. The portrait of himself, which he has drawn in his works, reveals two dark shadows—pride and anger. But he atones for these faults by his humble self-accusation.

"The poet rises from hatred of sin to penance, to the love of God and happiness in him."

### DANTE LITERATURE.

Dante's place in literature may be surmised from the Dante collections. In the United States the Dante Collection of Cornell has 7000 volumes, that of Pennsylvania University 2,500; Harvard, 2,267.



## STUDIES IN DANTE.

Dante's Divina Commedia—*Hettinger*.

Dante and Catholic Philosophy—*Ozanam*.

Dante—*Dr. Edward Moore*.

Dante in America—*Theodore W. Koch*.

Translations—*Charles Eliot Norton*.

*Dr. J. A. Carlyle*, in the Temple Classics—*Carey, Longfellow, A. J. Butler, Dean Plumptre*.

Dante, His Times and His Work—*A. J. Butler*.

Dante—*E. G. Gardner*.

Dante Alighieri—*Paget Toynbee*.

Companion to Dante—*Scartazzini*.

Aids to the Study of Dante—*Dinsmore*.

Essay—*Macaulay*.

Essay—*James Russell Lowell*.

Essay—*Thomas Carlyle*.

Essay—*Dean Church*.

## CARDINAL MANNING ON DANTE.

Cardinal Manning says of Dante that he is "the greatest of poets who, by every title of genius and by the intensity of his whole heart and soul, is the master-poet of the Catholic faith." Excepting Ozanam's beautiful *Dante et la Philosophie Chrétienne* (translated by John A. Mooney)—for I can hardly refer to Rossetti's edition—I know of no Catholic who has in our time made a translation or a comment on Dante. It has fallen to non-Catholic hands to honor his name. Perhaps it may be because of certain burning words against the human and secular scandals in the mediæval world. Bellarmine has long ago cleared away those aspersions from the Catholic loyalty of Dante.

There are three books which always seem to me to form a triad of Dogma, of Poetry and of Devotion—the *Summa* of St. Thomas, the *Divina Commedia* and the *Paradisus Animæ*.

The poem unites the book of Dogma and the book of Devotion, and is in itself both Dogma and Devotion clothed in conceptions of intensity and of beauty which have never been surpassed or equalled.

It was said of St. Thomas: *Post summam Thomæ nihil restat nisi lumen gloriæ*. It may be said of Dante: *Post Dantis paradisum nihil restat nisi visio Dei*.—Letter of Cardinal Manning to H. S. Bowden.



## THE PLAY.

In the writing of the "DANTE" care has been taken to alter no fact of history, and to portray those events which actually happened, as closely as possible. The very words of Dante have been used, almost invariably, and the text of Dr. John Carlyle, in the Temple Classics preferably, although the translations of Charles Eliot Norton, Carey and Longfellow, have been drawn upon as well as many of the authors who have written of Dante—Hettinger, Ozanam, Durand, Dinsmore and early as well as later writers. The "DANTE" is intended as a stage drama, and it aimed at portraying the chief events of Dante's life and of the Inferno. The Purgatorio and Paradiso lend themselves to spectacular effect, and the reading of them completes essentially the first Cantos. Their very subtlety and sublimity place them beyond dramatic art except in a rare combination of circumstances.

If the "DANTE" helps to a nobler idea of the great Florentine it will have done its work.

The play of "DANTE" is given by the students of St. Joseph's College, Philadelphia, on the Second and Fourth of May. Last year they gave the only non-professional presentation of "Everyman" with marked success. The Latin Play (given previously) of the "Two Captives" attracted the attention of scholars not only of the vicinity but of the United States.

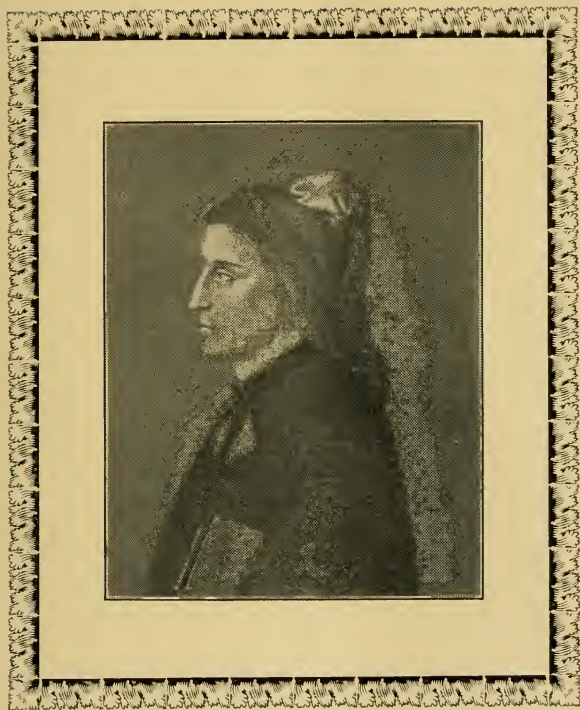
The "DANTE" of the Students of St. Joseph's College, while not sensational, will give at least some idea of the nobility of the great Dante, and chiefly in the very words of the illustrious Poet. No character or event is portrayed that is not substantially historical, and the incidents include the important events and thoughts of Dante's life and poem. To present Dante perfectly is an ideal, and would require a Dante; to impersonate the character no other could do it as a Dante could. But at least it is hoped to give a more worthy portrayal of him than recent presentations have given, and the effort will be to give the best possible, of the high-minded, sad-storied, nobly-gifted Florentine.



## THE STORY OF THE PLAY.

DANTE'S friends meet on the Plaza of Florence, discussing the approaching political crisis. Dante enters at the same time as Beatrice with the May-time dancers. He is the one chosen to deliver the city as head of the Priori. His enemy, Corso Donati, plots his downfall and banishment. In the conflict between the Neri and Bianchi, Dante appeals to the Florentines and both factions are banished, which foments the anger of Corso Donati against Dante. On return of the banished Neri, Dante's embassy to Rome is foiled by the triumphant Corso, who procures Dante's banishment from Florence, but is himself slain. The decree of banishment is passed against Dante, who, after various wanderings, retires to Ravenna. In the meantime, he beholds in his visions Beatrice, Virgil, Cerberus, the Shades in the Circles of the Inferno, the Malebranche, Ugolino, the Hypocrites, Usurers, Traitors and the shades in the Purgatorio and Paradiso.

While at Ravenna, Dante is invited to return to Florence on humiliating conditions, which he scorns. After lamenting the past glory of Florence, and proclaiming his love for Beatrice, the great Poet departs for Paradise. Pier Giardino recounts the discovery of the lost Cantos of the *Commedia*, through an apparition of Dante to his son, Jacopo Dante, and the scene closes with the obsequies of the Immortal Dante by Guido da Polenta at Ravenna.



Bargello Portrait Painted by Giotto,  
Marini "Restoration"



# SYNOPSIS OF SCENES.

## ACT I.

SCENE I. —PLAZA OF FLORENCE.

SCENE II. —COUNCIL CHAMBER OF THE PRIORI, FLORENCE.

SCENE III.—PALACE OF CARDINAL, ROME.

## ACT II.

SCENE I. —DARK WOOD—BEATRICE AND VIRGIL.

SCENE II. —DARK WOOD—VIRGIL AND DANTE.

SCENE III.—GATE OF HELL—VISIONS OF THE INFERNO.

1. The Door of Hell.
2. Charon and the Shades.
3. Cerberus and the Furies.
4. The Classic Poets.
5. Francesca.
6. Ugolino.
7. The Malebranche.
8. The Hypocrites.
9. The Traitors.

## ACT III.

SCENE I. —PALACE OF GUIDO DA POLENTA AT RAVENNA.

SCENE II. —ROOM IN PALACE OF RAVENNA—DEATH OF DANTE.

SCENE III.—PALACE HALL—OBSEQUIES OF DANTE.

Scenes painted by W. C. Feters.

Costumes—C. Fisher.

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## PROGRAMME OF MUSIC.

MARCH—"The Imperial".....*Anthony*  
OVERTURE—"Poet and Peasant".....*Suppe*  
PATROL—"Arrival of the Geeks".....*Moret*  
INTERMEZZO—"O Blarney".....*Helf*

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SELECTION—"Popular Sounds".....*Von Tölzer*  
VALSE CONCERT—"Wedding of the Winds".....*Hall*  
MARCH—"Navajo".....*Alstyne*

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SELECTION—"Prince of Pilsen".....*Luders*  
NOVELETTE—"Graces and Laces".....*Bratton*  
GAVOTTE—"Little Beauty".....*Bendix*  
EXIT MARCH—"The Social Whirl".....*Foot*

## CAST OF CHARACTERS :

DANTE.....			Conrad C. Williamson
CAN GRANDE.....	} Friends of Dante {	{	.....Eugene A. Martin
CINO DI PISTOIA.....			.....Joseph I. Rowan
GIOTTO.....			.....Eugene Heine
CASELLA.....			.....Thomas F. Healy
GUIDO CAVALCANTI.....			.....Leo A. Gowen
LAPO GIANNI.....	} Enemies of Dante {	{	.....Steph. J. McTague
CORSO DONATI.....			.....Robert A. Kilduffe
ROSSE DELLA TORSO.....			.....William K. Camblos
VINCENZA.....			.....Arthur E. McCarron
GIOVANNI.....			.....James A. Dilkes
ALTOVITI.....	} The Priori {	{	.....James I. Daly
ALBERTI.....			.....Francis J. McDermott
COURT MESSENGER.....			.....Edwin J. Saunders
FIRST GUARD.....			.....Joseph V. Somers
OFFICER.....			.....John I. McMahon
PAGE.....			J. Spencer Lucas
PIETRO.....			Joseph A. Dougherty
JACOPO.....			Theodore J. Town
GUIDO DA POLENTA.....			Joseph A. Fortescue
PIER GIARDINO.....			Frank Hardart, Jr.

### THE VISIONS.

#### Spirits.

BEATRICE.....	Augustine S. Hardart
VIRGIL.....	Joseph A. Dolan
CERBERUS.....	Henry G. Steinhagen
THE FURIES.....	{ Thomas J. Minnick
	{ Lawrence V. Flick
	{ Edward Scanlon
CHARON.....	Louis J. Frank
HOMER.....	Francis McNicol
HORACE.....	James M. Lucas
IVID.....	James T. Harrity
LUCAN.....	James F. Ryan
STATIUS.....	Anthony Stedem

#### The Circles of the Inferno.

THE TRIMMERS.....	Maurice Byrne
FRANCESCA.....	Francis X. Doyle
THE AVARICIOUS.....	John J. McMenamin
THE ANGRY AND SULLEN.....	Thomas F. Healy
UGOLINO.....	William A. Hayes
THE MALEBRANCHE.....	Eugene Martin
THE HYPOCRITES.....	Frank Hardart, Jr.
THE TRAITORS.....	Wm. A. Hayes

MALEBRANCHE—Leo Gowen, J. Lucas, William J. Devine, William Bonniwell, Bernard McGroarty, John Gallagher, William McCloskey, John J. McAninley.

NERI—Thomas J. Minnick, Francis J. McDermott, John McDonald, Maurice Byrne, Francis Hogan, James Ryan, J. Hart Toland.

BIANCHI—F. X. Doyle, Anthony Stedem, Francis X. Daily, James Byrne, James Dougherty, Thomas Holten, Francis Hayes.

FLORENTINES—Senators, Soldiers, Citizens, Counsellors.

DANCERS—Francis A. Downes, Daniel Stedem, Thomas Lawler, Charles M. Town, Francis X. Talbot, Paul F. Parsons, Louis Artman, Theodore J. Town, Robert A. Parsons, W. Hayden McFadden, Joseph A. Dougherty, Joseph J. Magee.

Stage Manager: JEROME EAGLE TOWN.

## PATRONS

His Excellency, Monsignor Diomede Falconio, D. D.  
Apostolic Delegate

His Eminence, James Cardinal Gibbons

His Grace, The Most Reverend Archbishop Ryan, D. D., LL. D.

His Grace, The Most Reverend John M. Farley, D. D.

Right Reverend Edmond F. Prendergast, D. D.

Right Reverend John J. Monaghan, D. D.

## PATRONESSES

Mrs. John Marie Campbell

Miss M. Brady

Miss Sue Teresa Costello

Mrs. T. M. Daly

Mrs. Devereux

Mrs. James Dolan

Mrs. F. F. Drueding

Mrs. Lawrence F. Flick

Miss Agnes Fox

Mrs. Felix Hanlon

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Mrs. Catharine Steele

Mrs. Charles M. Town

Mrs. Herman G. Vetterlein

Mrs. Katherine E. Wade

Mrs. Philip J. Walsh

Miss May G. Warren



Apostolic Delegation,  
Washington,  
April 13, 1904.

Reverend J. F. X. O'Connor, S. J.,

Reverend and Dear Father:—"His Excellency, the Apostolic Delegate, most willingly accedes to your request that he give his name as Patron of "Dante," and feels highly honored in doing so."

Most faithfully yours in Xt.,  
FRANCIS MARCHETTI.

---

Baltimore, April 11, 1904.

My Dear Fr. O'Connor:—

I cheerfully consent to be a Patron of the new play you have in view, to be presented by the students of St. Joseph's College.

I hope they will do justice to the noble theme.

Faithfully yours in Xt.,  
J. CARDINAL GIBBONS.

---

Dear Fr. O'Connor:—

I shall be most happy to act as Patron of "Dante," and also to see the play, if you kindly let me know when it shall be performed.

Yours faithfully in Xt.,  
P. J. RYAN.

Cathedral, April 12, 1904.



## ACT I.

### SCENE I.—PLAZA OF FLORENCE.

*(Citizens passing and re-passing—they stop to talk, then separate. Enter Can Grande and Cino di Pistoia from either side of the stage.)*

CAN GRANDE.—Hail friend ! Why wearest thou so dark a mask of trouble ? Or does thy visage mirror all the woes of Florence ?

CINO.—Ah ! Good Can Grande !

CAN GRANDE.—Why not say “ Good morrow ” ?

CINO.—*Good* morrow ? Here ? In Florence ? At this time ? When men read portents in each other’s eyes ? And every artless cloak hides clasped hand on hilt ? And every lip is shaped to mouth its “ Guelph or Ghibelline.” Good morrow here ! Nay ! at such a time the word but comes amiss. For what the morrow brings we know not—nay, nor dare to guess. It comes and shows us what we fear to see ; and when it goes, its bloody, dying rays are matched upon our streets.

CAN GRANDE.—Upon my word, an evil prophet thou, that speakest but to prophesy our doom. Thy every word doth call forth gibbering shades of ruin, dread and drear. I’ faith, thou croakest but ill omens. I prithee, friend, be cheerful an’ thou can’st. We are not come so near to ruin yet.

CINO.—No evil prophet I, but speaker of the truth. But thou, Grande, livest but in thy books, and lookest on our city with unseeing eyes. Thy pleasant home no scream of Guelph nor shouted cry of Ghibelline doth desecrate. Thou hearest but a whisper of the truth. For us without, the very air is rampant with contending strife. And every morn brings but the fear that ere the sun

has set, the streets of Florence will run full crimson with the life blood of her sons.

But, an' thou thinkest I speak with ill advisement, see Giotto comes. Of him ask question. Hear thou from him, if now I told thee aught but truth.

(*Enter Giotto.*)

CAN GRANDE.—Friend Giotto, greeting. Can'st thou not bear less evil tidings than Ser Cino, who tells me that we Florentines are doomed. That Florence rent by ill dissension is, and every dawn but nears the crisis.

GIOTTO.—I' faith, 'tis as he has said. But through the rifted curtain of our fate there gleams a ray of hope. For Providence with ever watchful eye upon our city, o'er guarding, for every danger sends a fitting help and so in humble guise our saviour comes. A man of learning and withal of action. God's own is he, oft swept wi' heaven's inspiring breath. Pure, whole-souled, a man to whom his conscience is his king. No thought of petty strife, ignobling brawl e'er enters in his heart. With love as for a mother, loves he Florence, deplores her wounds and, as I think, her saviour will he prove.

CAN GRANDE.—Of whom speaks he, friend?

CINO.—Of a man whose intellect, far-piercing through the common subtleties, untrammelled by its earthen fetters, roams afar within the realms of genius.

GIOTTO.—Aye, of one whose mind, not clinging to one thing, enfolds within its knowledge all the arts. In music lives his soul, and sculptured art, and even my poor skill with brush and canvas holds his eye. Grasp thou of whom we speak?

CAN GRANDE.—Nay, on my faith, I cannot hazard guess. For such a man as this, if earth holds such, were fit to gather reverence of us all.

CINO.—Well said ! He lives indeed—lives here within the city !  
Aye, and some there are who, like the curs they follow,  
snarl at him, and hate him for his genius and himself. Thou  
knowest him. Think man, bestir thy wits !

GIOTTO.—Aye, and oft-times hast thou gazed upon my portrait of  
him in the Bargello chapel.

CAN GRANDE.—Why friends—it cannot be—*yet must be !* 'Tis——

ALL.—Dante !

BRUNETTO. I pray he comes this day ; for in the light of this new  
wisdom will I find new dignity in him, new grace and cause  
to love.

*(A noise without as of a crowd approaching.)*

CINO.—Stand back, good friends. Here come the May-time  
dancers.

*(Enter dancers.)*

CASELLA.—Can Grande, is it not a marvel how gifted is our Dante ?  
Not only in painting hath he wondrous art, but in music,  
in which we spend many sweet hours.

CAN GRANDE.—In poetry, as well, does he revel with Virgil, Horace  
and Ovid. Taken by the sweetness of knowing the truth  
of things concealed in Heaven, and finding no other pleasure  
dearer to him in life, he left all other worldly care, and  
watching in his studies acquired the science which adorns  
and explains his verses.

GIOTTO.—And I remember how upon the tablet he drew an angel.

GUIDO.—Hast heard him speak of Beatrice ?

LAPO.—Yea ! has he not longed for me and thee to be wafted  
by enchantment over the sea wherever we may list, shielded  
from fortune and evil times, and bid the enchanter bring  
Monna Vanna and Monna Bice and that other lady into the  
barque, where we shall discourse and be forever happy.

*(Enter Dante.)*

ALL.—Hail ! Dante ! Hail !

DANTE.—Good friends, good morrow. I thank you for your greeting. Ah, Ser Cino, Can Grande, Giotto, glad am I to find my friends thus soon.

GIOTTO.—How goes the world, Ser Dante ?

DANTE.—As ever, and that is as thou well knowest, Ser Giotto. My world, good Cino, holds few friends and many enemies. I pray you, hath the Lady Beatrice passed this way ?

GIOTTO.—Nay, Dante. An' 'twere so, thy heart would tell ere we had breath to breathe her name.

DANTE.—Aye, so it would. I mind me of that day when first I saw her. Clad she was in raiment most becoming, and her beauty, stamped that morn upon my brain, hath never left me since, nor the chaste love it first awaked.

GUIDO.—Tell me, Dante, when first thou sawest thy Beatrice.

DANTE.—Ah, me ! a day in life it was, when first my eyes rested upon her, who is all beauty and all loveliness of life and holiness of heart. 'Twas on a May day, such as this, and I was at her father's house, Folco Portinari.

GUIDO.—A mere child was she in years.

DANTE.—Already nine times after my birth the heaven of light had returned, as it were to the same point, when there appeared the glorious lady of my mind, who was by many called Beatrice, who knew not what to call her.

LAPO.—Thou wert then much older, as it seems.

DANTE.—Nay, indeed, she appeared to me at the beginning of her ninth year, and I saw her about the end of my ninth. Her dress, a subdued and goodly crimson, girdled and adorned as but suited her tender age. At that moment I saw most truly the spirit of life which has its dwelling in the secretest chamber of my heart.

GUIDO.—And often since hast thou seen her?

DANTE.—Not so, but she liveth ever in my heart and mind.

LAPO.—Lo, there she comes, radiant with beauty.

*(Enter Beatrice and ladies and walks slowly across rear of stage.)*

GIOTTO *(aside to Can Grande.)*—See, comes the Lady Beatrice.

CAN GRANDE.—But thou sawest her not sooner than our Dante's heart told him of her coming.

*(Dante starts at seeing her and gazes intently till she disappears.)*

DANTE.—Ah, Can Grande, I had hoped that she would grace this festive day, but dull it seemed and sorry 'till the lustre of her presence shed a golden—

CAN GRANDE.—Ah, Dante, I pray you flatter not. Such words do ill beseem such as you. Leave that to others. From you but words of wisdom e'er should fall, to take seed in the listening ears of all, outblossom, and e'en should prove the calming peace of Florence.

DANTE.—Ah, Can Grande, how thy words do burn my brain. My life to her I dedicate, to make it what she will to have it be.

*(Chorus dances out.)*

GUIDO.—Of late have any lines been added to the earlier verse?

DANTE.—It was given me to behold a wonderful vision, wherein I saw things which determined me that I would say nothing further of this blessed one until such time as I could discourse more worthily concerning her. And to this end I labor all I can, as she in truth knoweth. If it be His pleasure through whom is the life of all things to continue my life a few years, it is my hope to write of her what hath not before been written of any woman. After which it may deem good to the master of life to call my spirit to behold the glory of its lady, who gazes on the glorious countenance of Him who is forever blessed.

*(Exit Dante and Guido. R. I.)*

(*Enter Corso Donati and Rosse della Torso. R. III.*)

CORSO.—The Bianchi have heard of our meeting in the church and are planning to defeat us.

ROSSE.—Aye, and they will appeal to the Podesta and Dante will lend ears to them against the Neri.

CORSO.—Dante ! How I hate that name ; and the man—I hate him for the honor he seems to steal from the heart of Florence, and I hate the man for he scorned me this morn upon the Plaza.

ROSSE.—Be we then swift to send our embassy to Boniface, that Charles of Valois may come anon and win peace for Florence.

CORSO.—Yea ! must we outwit the keen minded Dante, and should he think to send envoys to Rome, there must we be before, and fill the Papal ear with fear of Dante's power in the fairest city of Florence. Yea ! we shall plan and scheme and plot and play until we bring his ruin, for whilst he rules, no hope remains for me to fill ambition's dreams.

ROSSE.—I'm with thee, Corso, should a strife occur of Neri and Bianchi here.

CORSO.—Before a hand be raised to check we'll do our work in Rome.

(CURTAIN.)



## ACT I.

### SCENE II.—COUNCIL CHAMBER OF THE PRIORI.

*(Dante and his colleagues seated at a table.)*

DANTE.—My friends, methinks we shall have weighty work to do to-day. Ah! so soon.

*(Enter Messenger. L. I.)*

MESSENGER.—My lords, a party of nobles craves admittance to the Council.

DANTE.—Show them hither.

*(Enter the Bianchi, fully armed. L. I. go to Rt. Front.)*

DANTE.—What now, good friends?

GUIDO CAVALCANTI.—My lords, we do come here to protest. The party of the Neri, having assembled together in secret in the Church of Sante Croce, dispatched thence a messenger to our Holy Father, requesting him to send hither Charles, Duke of Valois, to preserve order in our city. Against such act do we protest, knowing full well they secretly desire our banishment. My lords, we ask for justice.

DANTE.—And that ye shall have to the full extent.

*(Enter Messenger. L. I.)*

MESSENGER.—My lords, some nobles without beg speech with thee.

DANTE.—Admit them.

*(Enter the Neri, also armed. L. I.)*

CORSO DONATI.—My noble lords, much have we been shocked at seeing the honorable Bianchi equipped with armor fully, and so we have come to ask the council by whose authority have they armed themselves.

GUIDO CAL.—My very dear friend, if mine eyes deceive me not, thou art not guiltless of the trappings of war.

CORSO.—'Tis well, my friend, to meet force with force.

GUIDO.—Aye ! 'tis well, also, to betake thyself to the hidden sanctuary of a Church, there to hold thy secret meeting that could not bear the light of day.

CHORUS OF NERI.—An insult (*all draw swords*)—avenge it by our Lady !—to arms !

DANTE.—Gentlemen, before the Council ?

CHORUS.—Aye ! before Heaven.

(*In single combat Corso kills Guido.*)

(*Enter the Florentines, who overcome the combatants, and order is restored.*)

DANTE (*to the Priori*).—My lords, ye have witnessed the disastrous quarrel just now taken place. The sacred chamber of the Council has been desecrated. To me it seems the offence is worthy of exile. What say you, my lords ?

ALTOVITI.—'Tis as you have said ; let them be exiled.

ALBERTI.—Aye ! my lord, the leaders should be exiled.

DANTE.—Then let the degree of banishment be published at once.

PODESTA.—We hereby banish from the City of Florence of the party of the Neri, Corso Donati, Rosse della Torso, Geri Spini, Giachonotto di Pazzi to Castello della Pievi. Of the Bianchi, Gentile de Cerchi, Torrigiano de Cerchi, Baldinaccio Aldiniari, to Serrazana (*reading the names of combatants.*)

ALBERTI. Methinks it would be well to send to Our Holy Father an ambassador to press him to exert his mighty influence to secure peace in Florence. Think ye not it would be well ?

ALTOVITI.—As thou hast said, and seems it well to me that Dante and Lapo Gianni should start for Rome at once.

DANTE.—Florence is my mistress. Her slightest wish is my command. And so at her bidding, I shall go to Rome.

(CURTAIN.)



## ACT I.

SCENE III.—COURTYARD OF THE CARDINAL'S PALACE  
AT ROME—GUARDS AT ENTRANCE ON LEFT.

(*Enter Rosse della Torso, Corso Donati and Train.*)

CORSO.—So there thou hast it ; we *must* win ; for Florence won,  
means death to all accursed Ghibellines.

ROSSE.—Aye, willingly. A curse upon them all, say I.

CORSO.—But, Rosse, think not that while we linger here, they'll  
carry on their schemes in Florence easily ?

ROSSE.—'Twas what I feared, indeed. We linger here and yet  
there may be danger rising. What thinkest thou of Florence ?

CORSO.—Florence? (*laughs*) Nay ! nay ! good friend Rosse,  
Florence, with all her nest of Ghibellines, is trembling in  
the hollow of our hand.

ROSSE.—I see not how ; it seems not so to me.

CORSO.—Come, sit thee here and listen. This is how. Charles,  
Duke of Valois, is in Florence now—our chief—strong—  
leagued with us, to crush the Ghibellines. In numbers we  
hold Florence easily.

ROSSE.—But thinkest thou that the Ghibellines are still ? Have  
they not leaders ? Aye, and foremost of them is he whom  
we fear most. Thou knowest of whom I speak.

CORSO.—Aye, Dante—my curse be on him, for he thwarts my  
every move. But see, we have him—clipped of wings, the  
falcon soon will fall and watch thou well and thou shalt see  
a fall most wondrous great.

ROSSE.—Of Dante speakest thou ?

CORSO.—Aye, of him. We have him now. He comes to Rome—has been here these last days, to plead the Ghibelline cause. But gold, bright shiny gold, my hands have spread and so he gains not his end. And e'en if he does reach the Cardinal, 'twere worse than useless to his cause.

ROSSE.—But Dante? Thou would'st not kill?

CORSO.—Nay, nay, not I. For I would save him for a living death, a mockery of life, a very living hell. With the Priori we may do as we will. And ere not long thou'lt see the fall I spoke of.

*(Enter Dante and friends. He makes for the Palace entrance, but the guards cross halberds.)*

FIRST GUARD.—Thou can'st not see the Cardinal now, my Lord.

DANTE.—So 'tis ever. I but idle here. There's something here, I know not what, that holds me back from audience. Three days thus have I tried and 'tis ever the same. Yet what other course to take?

CINO PISTOIA.—Despair not, noble Dante. Thou wilt yet save Florence.

CORSO (*advancing*).—Good morrow. (*Dante ignores him*). I pray thou art not sudden stricken silent. Good morrow (*louder*).

DANTE.—Good morrow. A greeting from such as thou were like a curse.

CORSO.—So, so, still friendly as when last we met.

DANTE.—'Twas of thy own conceiving. Mock me not.

CORSO.—What, I mock the noble Dante? Nay, not I. I bow before the poet. Noble genius, take mine homage. Savior of Florence! (*Retires laughing.*)

CINO.—An evil man. Heaven help us if Guelphs o'ercome us with Corso Donati as chief. (*They converse.*)

(*Enter Page.*)

PAGE.—Audience for Corso Donati.

CORSO.—Most willing I. Wait here (*to his train*). Good Rosse, wait me here. (*Enters Palace.*)

(*Enter Messenger.*)

FIRST GUARD.—No entrance here.

MESSENGER.—I bring a message here from Florence. See, it bears the Priori's seal. (*He enters.*)

DANTE.—Look, Cino, a messenger from Florence.

ROSSE (*aside*).—Ah, methinks the fall were here.

(*Enter officer of Cardinal's household.*)

OFFICER.—Ser Dante, come not here again. No audience the Cardinal has for you to-day, nor in the future.

DANTE.—What? Why what is this? I come accredited from Florence here to Rome.

OFFICER.—I bear the Cardinal's words.

CINO.—Ah, so lies the land, indeed? Our aim is but the good of Florence 'gainst the plotter's part.

OFFICER.—Silence, and take thee hence, for here no longer mayest thou stay.

(*Messenger seeking Dante.*)

MESSENGER.—Is there, perchance, among you one Dante Alighieri?

DANTE (*advancing*).—Aye! there is.

MESSENGER.—I bear this message from the Priori. In token thereof, see the seal.

DANTE (*taking the message*).—My thanks. Good Guido, give him gold, I pray.

(*Re-enter Corso.*)

CORSO (*aside to Rosse*).—Ah ! Watch now.

(*Dante breaks seal and reads.*)

DANTE.—O God, what sin of mine is this Thou dost avenge ? O friends, mark ye what act of violence the Neri plot. 'Tis not enough to rob me of my lands ; they banish me ; O God, Thy help I pray. Now Justice, break Thy scales !

CINO.—Come, Dante ! Up and return to Florence ; face thy foes and discomfit them with truth !

DANTE.—Return ? And I am banished ! Dost know the meaning of that same word—banished ? To live forever out of sight and sound of all we love ; to bear a felon's curse ; to tread all paths but that which leads to home ; to live and die unloved, misjudged.

CINO (*reading paper*).—Banished for the public good.

ALL.—What ! Dante !

DANTE.—Me banished ? No, though my bones may lie in exile's grave. Dear country, worthy of triumphal fame, mother of high-souled sons, my heart doth fill with grief and shame hearing what traitorous ones do in thee. Thou didst reign happy in the fair past days. Drive out that baleful evil in thee, and put away the sons who have made thy flowers all foul and frail. Turn to her, good citizens and true, and pray that she renew a nobler life. Florence is part of me and I of her, and linked is our fame or shame.

CORSO.—The links do gape a bit apart.

CINO.—Thou howling cur ! Get thee hence and rest in rottenness. Leave *men* alone ! 'Tis like thee thus to gibe the fallen !

CORSO.—Good morrow, noble Dante. (*Laughs.*) Fare thee well, savior of Florence ! (*Corso laughs.*)

DANTE.—Banished ! A felon ! No ! Though banished, still I'm Dante ; still poet ; still have life——

HIS FRIENDS.—And friends !

(*Exit with two of his friends.*)

CORSO (*as they go*).—I must hie me forth and haste my way to home—to Florence. (*Calling*) Hast a message ? Come, Rosse. (*They laugh.*)

(*Advance Giovanni da Polenta and Vincenzo Verli, two of Dante's train. They block the way.*)

VINCENZA.—Nay, stop awhile, I beg. I have somewhat to say.

CORSO.—Good friend, say on. (*Piously*) May Heaven bless thy words. But I, alas, must on my way.

VINCENZA.—I prithee stop awhile. I would not that I should use violence.

CORSO.—Violence ? Speak not so to thy betters, fellow !

ROSSE.—Shall I run him through ?

CINO.—Corso, but a short while since thou wert pleased to make but a sorry joke of noble Dante.

CORSO.—Aye, that did I, and with good spirit. And now I'll joke with thee.

(*Strikes him across the face.*)

CINO.—Nay, good friend. The wittiest part is yet to come. (*Throwing his glove in Corso's face.*)

CORSO.—Now, by the rood——

CINO.—Fight, Villain ! (*Cino and Corso fight ; Corso is killed.*)

(CURTAIN.)

## ACT I.

### SCENE IV.

(*Dante alone. Two Florentine boys run in on tip-toe, stop, look at Dante; look, listen; then say: "Sh!"*)

BOTH.—Sh! (*Look to back, right, left.*)

PIETRO (*pointing to Dante, whispering.*)—Dante!

JACOPO (*shakes his head—looks.*)—Yes.

PIETRO.—They say he sees visions.

JACOPO (*puckers mouth.*)—Oo, oh! Visions! What's visions?

PIETRO.—Ghosts.

JACOPO.—Live ghosts?

PIETRO.—Live ghosts! (*Contemptuously.*) There's no live ghosts; the're all dead.

JACOPO (*looks scared.*)—Dead ghosts! And Dante sees 'em?

PIETRO.—Ye ep. He sees 'em. (*Slowly shaking his head.*)

JACOPO.—Are you afraid of ghosts?

PIETRO.—No, I'm not afraid! (*ooh! shivers, jumps, looks around, shakes.*) I'm not afraid . . . . . a . . f . . raid . . . .

JACOPO.—Who said he saw 'em?

PIETRO.—My father told my mother.

JACOPO.—Oh! that's different, if it was yer mother told yer father; women's always seein' visions or ghosts—or some-thin'. What sort o' ghosts did he see?

PIETRO.—Shades.

JACOPO.—Shades? Lamp shades? Window shades?

PIETRO.—No shades. (*Shudders.*) That's what mother told me.

JACOPO.—Where did he see 'em? In the woods?

PIETRO.—Naw! In Hell.

JACOPO.—In where?

PIETRO.—Hell!

PIETRO.—Oh ! Oo ! (*Looking at Dante.*) It makes the cold shivers run up and down my back—just like when you're goin' to bed in the dark—an' you think you hear somethin'—and you can't see anything—and you don't know where you are—and you—you think there's shades—or something—and you feel so scared—you want to scream—and you—you're just too scared to scream—and you can hear your own breath puffing like an adder. Did y'ever feel like that—scared to death ?

JACOPO.—Yes—and—I—feel—kind—o'scared now.

PIETRO.—And mother said he saw visions and shades in Purgatory and in Paradise.

JACOPO.—Well, how on earth did he get back ?

PIETRO.—You mean—how did he get back on earth ?

JACOPO.—Well, how did he get back ?

PIETRO.—Guess he was scared back ; 'cause you can't get back out of Hell, and you, and you don't want to get back out of Heaven.

JACOPO.—Let's go ; I'm scared, but don't run. Dont let's r-u-n.

PIETRO.—Say, I'm gettin' scared ; feel kind o' creepy—near that—— (*Points to Dante.*)

JACOPO.—No, don't let's run. Oh ! Oh ! (*Walk slowly, trot, then run with frightened, smothered scream.*)

(*Dante rises. Monologue.*)

DANTE.—When my soul seems to go forth from body, and my eyes meet the things of the world beyond—scenes beyond the ken of mortal mind—thoughts sublime beyond human utterance—vast and wide as creation—ranging from the depths of the abyss up to the throne of the Most High—and then I come back to this world—it palls upon me—for here is sin—vice—misery—the littleness of the souls of men—the emptiness of human dreams—the bitter disappointment of the ideals—but *there* is God's unfailing justice—*there* God's all sinless sanctity—*there* the beauty and glory of the face of God.

(CURTAIN.)



## ACT II.

### SCENE I.—DARK WOOD.

*(Virgil alone—walks across stage, and back. Beatrice appears to him—Dark stage—Spot light suddenly on Beatrice—She calls Virgil.)*

BEATRICE.—Virgil ! Poet of Mantua ! Hearken unto me.

VIRGIL.—O lady, fair and blessed, why callest thou me ?

BEATRICE.—O courteous Mantuan spirit, whose fame still lasts in the world, and will last as long as time, my friend is so impeded in his way upon the desert shore, that he has turned back for terror, and I fear that he may already be so far astray that I have come too late for his relief.

VIRGIL.—I pray you to command me.

BEATRICE.—Go now, and with thy ornate speech and with what is necessary for his escape, help him so that I may be consoled thereby.

VIRGIL.—Pray, fair lady, tell me who thou art who thus commandest me and whence thou comest ?

BEATRICE.—I am Beatrice, and I come from a place of bliss, whither I desire to return.

VIRGIL.—Then tell me why thou hast left that place of bliss ?

BEATRICE.—Love moved me, that makes me speak, and when I shall be before my Lord, I oft will praise thee to Him.



VIRGIL.—O lady of virtue, through whom alone mankind excels all that is contained within the Heaven which has the smallest circle, so grateful to me is thy command that my obeying, were it done already, seems tardy ; it needs not that thou more explain to me thy wish. But tell me the cause why thou forebearest not to descend into this center here below, from the spacious place to which thou dost long to return ?

BEATRICE.—Since thou desirest to know thus far, I will tell thee, briefly, why I fear not to come within this place. Those things alone are to be feared that have the power of hurting, the others not, which are not fearful.

VIRGIL.—Do not then these miseries touch thee and the flames burn thee ?

BEATRICE.—No, for I am made such by God in His grace.

VIRGIL.—Blessed spirit, was this thy whole reason ?

BEATRICE.—No, she who is the noblest Lady in Heaven sent Lucia, enemy of all cruelty, to me, and she advised me to help him who loved me so, that for me he left the vulgar crowd.

VIRGIL.—My noble lady, thou hast spoken well, and at once thy bidding I shall do.

BEATRICE.—Mayest thou succeed, by grace of God.

*(Dark stage—Beatrice disappears suddenly.)*

## ACT II.

### SCENE II.

*(Enter Dante from the side—walks near to Virgil.)*

DANTE.—Have pity on me, whate'er thou be, whether shade or veritable man.

VIRGIL.—Not man, a man I once was.

DANTE.—Who wert thou?

VIRGIL.—Virgil I am, or rather Virgil I was.

DANTE.—O glory and light of other poets ! May the long zeal avail me, and the great love that made me search thy volumes. Thou art my master and my author ; thou alone art he from whom I took the good style that hath done me honor.

VIRGIL.—But thou ; why returnest thou to such disquiet ? Why ascendest not the delectable mountain which is the beginning and cause of all gladness ?

DANTE.—O ! Virgil, when I commenced to mount the steep, a Leopard, light and very nimble and covered with spotted hair, impeded my way ; then a Lion seemed coming upon me with head erect and furious with hunger, so that the air seemed to have fear thereat ; and after him a She-Wolf, that looked full of all cravings in her leanness, brought such heaviness upon me with the terror of her aspect, that I lost the hope of ascending.

VIRGIL.—Thou must take another road, for the beast, because of which thou criest, lets not men pass her way, but so entangles that she slays them.

DANTE.—But, O ! poet, how am I to know this other road ?

VIRGIL.—Follow me and I will be thy guide, and lead thee hence through an eternal place, where thou shalt hear the hopeless shrieks, shalt see the ancient spirits in pain, so that each calls for a second death.

DANTE.—Poet ! I beseech thee by that God Whom thou knowest not—that I may escape this ill and worse—lead me where thou now hast said, so that I may see the Gate and those whom sorrow makes so sad.

*(Exit Virgil and Dante, as though about to go around the hill—Virgil first, and Dante following after.)*

(CURTAIN.)

## ACT II.

### SCENE III.—THE VISIONS.

*(Dante and Virgil before the Gate of Hell.)*

DANTE.—*(Looking at the inscription ; gesture of terror ; pauses ; turns to Virgil ; speaks.)*

Master, what are these words of colour obscure that I see written above the Gate?

“Leave all hope, ye that enter,  
Through me is the way into the doleful city,  
Through me the way into the eternal pain,  
Through me the way among the people lost,  
And eternal I endure—leave all hope ye that enter.”

Their meaning is hard.

VIRGIL.—Here must all distrust be left ; all cowardice must here be dead. We are come to the place where I told thee we should see the wretched people who have lost the good of intellect.

*(Dark stage ; flashes of light ; dim figures moving ; rushing of fire ; sighs ; plaints ; deep wailings. Strange tongues ; horrible outcries ; words of pain ; tones of anger ; voices deep and hoarse ; sounds of hands. Dante listens with signs of horror and repeats.)*

### VISION.—THE TRIMMERS.

DANTE.—Master, what is this that I hear? And who are these that are so overcome with pain? I hear sighs, plaints and deep wailings sounding through the starless air ; it makes me sadly weep ; strange tongues ; horrible outcries ; words of pain ; tones of anger ; voices deep and hoarse ; and sounds of hands amongst them.

VIRGIL.—These dreary souls are those Trimmers living without blame or praise, for themselves ; Heaven chased them forth to keep its beauty ; and Hell receives them not, for the wicked would have some glory over them.

DANTE.—What makes them lament so bitterly?

VIRGIL.—They have no hope of death ; their blind life is so mean they envy every other lot ; Mercy and justice disdain them. Let us not speak more of them. They pass, but look thou again. Lo ! the old man, white with ancient hair, shouting out to yon depraved spirits.

(*Charon in his barque appears.*)

CHARON.—I come to lead souls to the other shore, into the eternal darkness, into fire and into ice. But thou who art there alive, depart from those who are dead. A lighter boat must carry thee.

VIRGIL (*To Charon.*)—Charon, vex not thyself : thus it is willed there, where what is willed can be done ; and ask no more.

VIRGIL (*To Dante.*)—My son, those who die under God's wrath all assemble here from every country. They are prompt to pass the river. Divine justice spurs them so that fear becomes desire ; by this way no good spirit ever passes.

DANTE.—The very thought of my terror bathes me now with sweat.

VIRGIL.—Let us behold these who dwelt in this blind world.

DANTE.—How shall I stay when thou art filled with fear, who art my strength in doubt.

VIRGIL.—Their anguish doth paint on my face pity, which thou takest for fear.

VISION.—THE PAGAN POETS.

DANTE.—Ah ! Virgil, what sighs are these that tremble in the air ?

VIRGIL.—They, Dante, do arise from the ineffable desire of them who sinn'd not in the times of Pagandom, and who, being unbaptized, see not the glory of the Godhead. And I, Dante, am of them.

DANTE.—But who ? ——

VIRGIL.—They come.

(*A number of the Shades here pass before Dante and Virgil.*)

FIRST SHADE.—Honour the great Poet !

SECOND SHADE.—Who was, who is, who will be !

THIRD SHADE.—His shade returns that was departed.

VIRGIL.—Mark him with sword in hand. The lord of all, *that* is Homer ; and him, upon whose lips there seems to hang a jest. He is Horace ; after whom comes Ovid ; and last is Lucan.

DANTE.—I know you all, and in my knowledge honour you ; masters of my study have you been. But am I worthy you ?

FIRST SHADE.—Thou art of us.

SECOND SHADE.—A Poet.

THIRD SHADE.—The Sixth.

DANTE.—Your pupil, my masters.

*(Shades vanish.)*

DANTE.—(*To Virgil*) Gone are the lords of highest song, that eagle-like soars high above the rest. But who are these approaching silent and majestic ?

*(Number of Shades enter.)*

VIRGIL.—Heroes of elder days, men who lived so that the world knew of their living ; Hector ; Cæsar armed with falcon eyes ; Brutus who expelled the Tarquin ; and there, alone, apart, the Saladin.

DANTE.—And these ?

VIRGIL.—Knowest him not, the master of those who know and with him Socrates and Plato. A glory to be treasured in the heart it is, even to have seen them.

DANTE.—Ah, yes ! I see also Tully and Seneca, the moralist, Euclid, and near him Averrhöes, who made the great comment.

CHORUS OF SHADES.—Welcome, Dante, and Farewell.

*(They vanish.)*

DANTE.—Ah, what a constellation of great minds was this? But, like a galaxy that shines in blackest night, its rays are swallowed up in darkness.

VIRGIL.—For all eternity.

DANTE.—Eternity that endeth not forever.

(*Cerberus appears, stands and growls.*)

DANTE.—O thou fierce and strange monster, with three throats and dog-like in thy barking, thine eyes are red, thy beard greasy and black—thy hands possessed of claws, with which thou clutchest and dost flay and piecemeal rend the spirits; wilt thou destroy us like them? O pacify him, noble Sage, ere he devour us. (*Virgil takes some earth and casts it into his gullet. Cerberus disappears and Ciacco comes upon the scene.*)

#### VISION.—CARNAL SINNERS.

DANTE.—Who are ye that are swept by the hellish storm that whirls and smites you? Master, who are those people whom the black air lashes?

THE SENSUAL.—We are the Carnal Sinners doomed to this torment, and who subjected reason to lust—and as their wings bear along the starlings—so that blast leads us hither and thither, up and down, with no hope even of less pain.

DANTE.—Poet, willingly would I speak with those two that go swiftly on together and seem borne in the wind.

VIRGIL.—Those are Paolo and Francesca.

FRANCESCA.—O living creature, gracious and benign! that goest through the black air, visiting us who stained the earth with blood, if the King of the Universe were our friend, we would pray him for thy peace, seeing that thou hast pity of our perverse misfortune. Love led us to one death; Caina waits for him who quenched our life.



DANTE.—Francesca, thy torments make me weep with grief and pity. Hearing thee speak, and seeing the other weep so bitterly, maketh my heart faint with pity, as if I myself were dying. (*They disappear.*) They have departed. But who art thou?

CIACCO.—I am called Ciacco. For the baneful crime of gluttony I languish in the rain. (*Bends his head and is quiet.*)

VIRGIL.—He wakes no more until the Angel's trumpet sounds.

(*Furies appear.*)

VIRGIL.—Three hellish furies, these, stained with blood—who have the limbs and attitude of women—and are girt with greenest hydras. For hair they have little serpents and cerastes, wherewith the horrid temples are bound. This is Megaera on the left hand. She that weeps upon the right is Alecto. Tersiphone is in the middle. (*They smite their breasts with their claws, crying loudly, "Let Medusa come that we may change him into stone."*)

VIRGIL.—(*To Dante*) Turn thee backwards, and keep thy eyes closed, for if the Gorgon show herself, and thou shouldst see her, there would be no returning up again. (*Virgil turns Dante around and holds his hands over Dante's eyes. Virgil then releases Dante and cries*) "They have gone."

DANTE.—My master ! Now show me what these other people are.

THE AVARICIOUS.—Avaricious are we, condemned to pain here, for avarice.

VIRGIL.—See now those souls, whom anger overcame.

THE ANGRY.—Sullen and angry were we, in the sweet air that is gladdened by the sun. Now live we sullen here in the black mire.

THE HYPOCRITES.—O Tuscan, that art come to the college of the sad hypocrites, disdain not to tell us who thou art.



DANTE.—On Arno's beauteous river, in the great city I was born  
and grew. What punishment is on ye that glitters so?

THE HYPOCRITES.—Our mantles are made of lead so thick that  
the weight there causes their scales to creak.

VIRGIL.—These are the traitors, among them Bocca.

DANTE.—Now, accursed traitor. I do not want thee to speak.  
To thy shame I will bear tidings of thee.

BOCCA.—Thou cans't say. I saw him of Duera—where sinners  
stand fixed in the ice.

DANTE.—Ah ! justice Divine ! who shall tell in few words the  
many fresh pains and travails that I see, and why does guilt  
of ours thus waste us. Behold creatures strange and sad.

(SCENE ENDS.)

VISION.—UGOLINO AND RUGGHERI.

*(Ugolino is gnawing a skull, and as Dante addresses him,  
he raises his mouth, and wipes it upon the hair of the head  
he had laid waste behind.)*

DANTE.—Who then art thou, O wretched one that featest so  
hideously?

UGOLINO.—Thou willest that I renew desperate grief, which wrings  
my heart, even at the very thought before I tell thereof.  
But, if my words are to be a seed, that may bear fruit of  
infamy to the traitor whom I gnaw, thou shalt see me speak,  
and weep at the same time.

DANTE.—Alas ! even now do I weep for very horror.

UGOLINO.—I know not who thou mayest be, nor by what mode  
thou hast come down here ; but, when I hear thee, in truth  
thou seemest to me a Florentine.

DANTE.—Yea—and of all Florentines the sad one.

UGOLINO.—Thou hast to know that I was Count Ugolino, and this the Archbishop Ruggieri ; now I will tell thee why I am such a neighbor to him. That by the effects of his ill devices I, confiding in him, was taken, and thereafter put to death, it is not necessary to say. But that which thou canst not have learnt, that is, how cruel was my death, thou shalt hear, and know if he has offended me. A narrow hole within the tower, which from me has the title of Famine, and in which others yet must be shut up, had through its opening already shown me several moons, when I slept the evil sleep that rent for me the curtain of the future.

DANTE.—Sad, indeed, thy fate.

UGOLINO.—(This man seemed to me lord and master chasing the wolf and his whelps. \* \* \* And after short course, the father and his sons seemed to me weary ; and methought I saw their flanks torn by the sharp teeth.) When I awoke before the dawn, I heard my sons, who were with me weeping in their sleep, asking for bread. Thou art right cruel, if thou dost not grieve already at the thought of what my heart foreboded ; and if thou weepest not, at what art thou used to weep ? They were now awake, and the hour approaching at which our food used to be brought in, and each was anxious from his dream, and below I heard the outlet of the horrible tower locked up, whereat I looked into the faces of my sons, without uttering a word. I did not weep, so strong grew I within ; they wept ; and my little Anselm said : “Thou lookest so, father, what ails thee ?” But I shed no tear, nor answered all that day, nor the next night, till another sun came forth upon the world. When a small ray was sent into the doleful prison, and I discerned in their four faces the aspect of my own, I bit on both my hands for grief ; and they thinking that I did it from desire of eating, of a sudden rose up and said, “father, it will give us much less pain, if thou wilt eat of us ; thou didst put upon us this miserable flesh, and do thou strip it off !” Then I

calmed myself in order not to make them more unhappy ; that day and the next we all were mute, ah ! hard earth ! why didst thou not open ? When we had come to the fourth day, Gaddo threw himself stretched out at my feet, saying, “ My father ! why don’t you help me ? ” There he died : and even as thou see’st me, saw I the three fall one by one, between the fifth day and the sixth, whence I betook me, already blind to groping over each, and for two days called them after they were dead ; then, fasting had more power than grief.

DANTE—Ah, Pisa ! Scandal to the people of the beauteous land where “ Si ” is heard . . . . . If Count Ugolino had the fame of having betrayed thee of thy castles, thou oughtest not to have put his sons into such torture.

(END OF SCENE.)

#### VISION OF THE MALEBRANCHE.

*( Virgil and Dante stand gazing into a boiling pit, when suddenly Virgil draws Dante back, and as he looks up, startled, a black demon comes running up the cliff, driving before him a terrified sinner. )*

BARBARICCIA. —Ye Malebranche of our bridge ! lo ! one of Santa Zita’s Elders, thrust him under while I return for others.

FIRST MALEBRANCHE. —Come, wretch, jump in here, and unless thou wishest to make trial of our drags, come not out above the pitch.

SINNER. —Mercy, mercy, strike me not.

SECOND MALEBRANCHE. —Covered, thou must dance thee here.

VIRGIL *(to Dante.)* —That it may not be seen that thou art here, cower down behind a crag.

DANTE. —I’ll do as thou biddest.

VIRGIL.—Be none of ye outrageous ! Before ye touch me, come one of you forth to hear me.

BARBARICCIA.—Let Malecoda go.

VIRGIL.—Malecoda, I have come here with will Divine and fate propitious. Let us pass on, for 'tis willed in Heaven that I show another this savage way.

MALECODA.—Strike him not.

VIRGIL (*to Dante.*)—O thou that sittest cowering, securely now return to me.

THIRD MALEBRANCHE.—Shall I touch him ?

FIRST MALEBRANCHE.—See that thou nick him sharply.

MALECODA.—Quiet, quiet, there.

VIRGIL.—May we now proceed ?

MALECODA.—Shortly, I shall send some of my men to keep thee on the way, for they will not be treacherous.

DANTE (*to Virgil.*)—Master what is this that I see ? Ah ! without escort let us go on, for dost thou not see how they grind their teeth, and with their brows threaten mischief to us ?

VIRGIL.—Do not be afraid ; for it is at the boiled wretches that they do so.

(*The Malebranche quarrel among themselves.*)

SECOND MALEBRANCHE.—Oh, Rubicante, see thou plant thy clutches on him and flay him.

DANTE.—Master, learn if thou canst, who is that piteous wight fallen into the hands of his enemies.

VIRGIL.—Whence comest thou here ?

CIAMPOLO.—I was born in the kingdom of Navarre, and because I bartered justice for gold do I now reckon for it in this heat.

BARBARICCIA.—Ask on, stranger, if thou wouldst know more from him, but stand off whilst I shall pierce him.

VIRGIL.—O unhappy man of Navarre, dost thou know any of thy fellows in this torment?

CIAMPOLO.—Just now I parted with a neighbor; would I still were covered with him, for I should not fear claw nor hook.

BARBARICCIA.—Drive that wretch below. After him imps, and woe to you if Malecoda shall hear of your neglect. (*To Virgil*) Here do thou go this way; I shall hurry opposite and try to find him.

DANTE.—(*To Virgil*) These demons will surely be sore vexed at this mockery put upon them. Master, hurry, I dread the Malebranche; they are already after us, I so imagine them that I hear them now.

VIRGIL.—Before they come again, we shall descend into the other chasm, and escape the imagined chase. (*Dante and Virgil ascend just in time to escape the Malebranche. They rush in and make fierce gestures at Dante and Virgil as they recede.*)

DANTE.—Great Master, lead on—for I would see the brightness follow upon this gloom, and ere I see a gleam of Paradise shall I return to earth awhile.

VIRGIL.—Then, follow me—as I ascend the hill.

DANTE.—I follow. And e'en now distinguish through a round opening the beauteous things which Heaven bears, and soon we'll issue out, again to see the stars.

(*Exit slowly Virgil and Dante.*)

(CURTAIN.)

## ACT III.

### SCENE I.

*(Dante in deep meditation in his chamber, when Guido da Polenta and Lapo, two of his bosom friends, enter to congratulate him on his recall to Florence.)*

GUIDO.—Did we not tell thee, many a time and oft, that thou wouldst be entreated to return to thy native city? And so, did we not truly forecast the event?

LAPO.—Good friend, I fear me, thou talkest to the empty air, for if 'tis true that there a man is where his thoughts are, our noble Signor is not at Ravenna.

GUIDO.—Then he is in the triumphal procession wending his way into Florence.

DANTE.—Aye, where he is clothed in sack-cloth instead of gold; where he treads the naked stones lest he should shame a steed, and is acclaimed by the jeers of his enemies.

LAPO.—I told thee his fancy wandered. And yet it is a common thing for poets, else how concoct their airy scenes.

GUIDO.—Poet or none, it is uncommon to grieve when joyful tidings are announced.

DANTE.—Not when the joy belongs to thy foe.

LAPO.—Why doth sadness so sit upon thy heart, that thou dost seem to take no joy in life.

DANTE.—To me have been spoken those words of bitterness “Thou shalt relinquish everything of thee, beloved most dearly;” and thou shalt prove how salt a savor hath the bread of others, and how hard a path to climb and to descend the stranger's stairs.

LAPO.—Wilt thou then not return to thy beloved Florence?



DANTE.—How grateful to you am I, that you have at heart my restoration to my country. I am bound to you more gratefully in as much as an exile rarely finds a friend. I must by my answer, disappoint the wishes of some little minds.

LAPO—What then is thy resolve?

DANTE.—As by a decree, I am allowed to return to Florence, if I pay a certain sum of money and submit to the humiliation of asking and receiving absolution. Is such an invitation then, thus to return to his country, glorious to Dante Alighieri after suffering in exile almost fifteen years. This is not the way that shall lead me back to my country. I will return with hasty steps, if you, or any other, can open to me a way that shall not derogate from the fame and honor of Dante. But, if in no such way Florence can be entered, then Florence I shall never enter.

GUIDO.—Truly hast thou suffered bitter anguish.

DANTE.—Ah, would it had pleased the dispenser of all things that this excuse had never been needed. For it pleased the citizens of the fairest and most renowned daughter of Rome—Florence—to cast me out of her most sweet bosom, where I was born and bred and passed half of the life of man, and in which, with her good leave, I still desire with all my heart to repose my weary spirit, and finish the days allotted me. And so I have wandered in almost every place to which our language extends, too often unjustly imputed to the sufferer's fault. Truly I have been a vessel without sail and without rudder, driven about upon different ports and shores by the dry wind that springs out of dolorous poverty; and hence have I appeared vile in the eyes of many who, perhaps, by better repute had conceived of me a different impression, and in whose sight not only has my person become thus debased, but an unworthy opinion created of everything which I did or which I had to do.

GUIDO.—We pray thee, dearest friend and master, tell to us thy wrong, and we shall avenge it. But is it not true that thou hast been summoned to re-enter thine own dear City?

DANTE.—Yes, summoned truly, even as they would ask a criminal to ascend a scaffold.

LAPO.—It cannot be that they would dare seek thy life.

DANTE.—Life! they seek that which is dearer to anyone who claims the name of man. Wrongly did they banish me; maliciously did they belie me even in exile; now, deeply, would they degrade me. "Upon condition" they say! "that you perform a fitting atonement for past wrongs, you may enter the city" and then they dare to tell me that I must enter as a penitent. I who am wronged must atone! I who lived only that the city might prosper! And then they say that in their clemency! Oh! bitter wrong! they pardon me. May I be justly held the meanest, the most unworthy of mortals ere I even entertain the thought.

GUIDO.—Now, good, dear friend do not boil thy blood o'er every flame that leapeth up in thee. Let us talk of thy dear one, whom thou wouldst have to honor thee even though the world despised.

DANTE.—Ah! it was she who, just as you entered, engaged all my thoughts. But nevermore shall I behold her on this sphere. Far indeed be it from me to lament my wrongs when such a flower is plucked from the thorny garden, even though beyond all compare more fair than others.

LAPO.—Oft hast thou wished that thou, Guido and I were taken by some enchanter's spell over every sea, with Vanna, Beatrice and my love, to keep us eternal company.

DANTE.—A thing of mortal birth, and yet so beautiful and pure, that God meant in her to work a wonder new. Her love was that of pearl of priceless worth; from her fair eyes, spirits passed forth inflamed with Love's sweet blaze; in her, as in a type, was beauty true.



GUIDO.—And I remember how the whole city with her did mourn her father, not for himself, but because of her. Her face all bathed in gentleness, melted the hearts of even the hardest.

DANTE.—Methought then, that if Death were to smite this gentle lady fair, Love might say “Lo! I have lost my dearest, fairest, best.”

GUIDO.—Into that high Heaven hath Beatrice passed, where the angels find their peace.

DANTE.—Yes, for the clear light of her humility passed into Heaven with such exceeding power that the Eternal Sire wondered that such a flower had bloomed so long on earth, and wondering, bade her move up higher to a place full worthy of a thing so fair.

LAPO.—I thought I had parted evermore, with themes of love.

GUIDO.—So had I, but none could have so strong within me stirred good thoughts to rise, as our noble friend’s greatest grace.

DANTE.—Into high Heaven hath Beatrice passed, that kingdom where the angels find their peace, and she dwells with them. It was not spell of cold that killed at last, nor that of heat, but her own great and sweet benignity. The clear light of her humility caused the Eternal a sweet desire to call away so bright a flower, for he saw this troublous life was all unworthy of a thing so fair. When in my saddened mind I bring back her form whose beauty pierced my heart—then comes a longing fraught with sweetness, and such pain that I shudder as I feel my misery. And so transformed am I that my lot is cast apart from men. Then, weeping in my lament, I cry on Beatrice, saying “Art thou dead?” And as I call, I by her am comforted. Ah me, as often as I call to mind that I shall nevermore see the fair Lady whom I wait and weep, so great an inward grief my heart doth find, that I say, “Soul why dost thou not depart.” So I bid death come near and say “O come to me” so lovingly that I am envious of whome’er doth die.

GUIDO.—Come, gentle Dante, be not ever sad, but think of brighter things than this sad song of sorrow.

DANTE.—Nay, no other light can bring brightness into my life save the brightness of the land beyond.

(CURTAIN.)

## ACT III.

### SCENE II.—PALACE OF RAVENNA.

*(Guido enters with Can Grande, relates the death of Dante—his appearance—and the refusal of Ravenna to give up his body to Florence.)*

GUIDO.—The great Dante is no more. His soul has gone to follow his Beatrice and take his place with her before the throne of God.

CAN GRANDE.—And how came the end, was it in much pain?

GUIDO.—As he himself said of Beatrice—it was not the cold that killed him—nor yet the heat, but his own great heart was broken by the sorrows of life, and he went to take his place among those blessed Spirits he had seen in moments of his vision.

CAN GRANDE.—As I remember him—so fair and strong he looked—yet in those years there must have come a change.

GUIDO.—His face in death is worthy of the living Dante.

CAN GRANDE.—Indeed must it mirror one who had led a life apart from the world in which he dwelt, and had been led by love and faith along hard, painful and solitary ways to behold the high triumph of the true kingdom.

GUIDO.—In death the face is one of the most pathetic upon which human eyes have ever looked—it shows the conflict between the strong nature of the man and the hard dealings of fortune, between the idea of his life and its practical experience. The look is grave and stern almost to grimness—a scornful lift to the brow, contracted as from painful thoughts—and yet therein hidden, but not lost, are the marks of tenderness, refinement, self-mastery, which gives to him, dead, an ineffable dignity and melancholy. There

is no weakness nor failure there. It is the image of the strong fortress of a strong soul, "buttressed on conscience and impregnable will." It was battered by blows of enemies without and within, and bore the dints of many a siege—but has stood firm and unshaken against all attacks, until the warfare was at an end.

(*Enter Pier Giardino.*)

CAN GRANDE.—Lo ! where Giardino comes.

GUIDO.—Welcome, Ser Giardino. What news from the Archbishop?

GIARDINO.—Florence claims the body of Dante to do him high honor as the noblest of her sons.

GUIDO AND CAN GRANDE.—Florence !

GUIDO.—Nay. She shall not have him. Alive she cast him forth an exile—now dead, she seeks to do him honor. It shall not be. His own words forbid it, for he said "If no one can open to me a way that shall not derogate from the honor of Dante—then Florence I shall never enter." And enter Florence dead—he shall not, since when living he was not so in honor deemed worthy.

CAN GRANDE AND GIARDINO.—No—no—never shall he leave Ravenna.

GIARDINO.—But I have wondrous news to tell.

GUIDO.—Pray tell it Giardino.

GIARDINO.—This very day before dawn, did Jacopo di Dante, the great poet's son, come to my house.

CAN GRANDE —Jacopo di Dante !

GIARDINO.—Jacopo. He told me that this very night his father, Dante, had appeared to him, clothed in the whitest garments, and his face resplendent with an extraordinary light.

GUIDO.—Most wonderful ! And did the vision speak ?

GIARDINO.—Yea, verily ; Jacopo asked him if he lived, and Dante replied, “ Yea, but in the true life, not our life.”

CAN GRANDE.—What further said he ?

GIARDINO.—Jacopo asked if he had completed his work before passing into the true life, and where was that part missing which none had been able to find.

GUIDO.—Did the Spirit answer ? For of his great poem we have failed to find thirteen of the cantos. •

GIARDINO.—Dante seemed to answer “ Yes, I have finished it”, and, taking Jacopo by the hand, led him to his sleeping chamber and, touching one of the walls, said “ What you have sought for so much, *is here.*” At these words Dante and Sleep fled from Jacopo, and he could not rest till he came to tell me what he had seen.

CAN GRANDE.—And what further has been done ?

GIARDINO.—We went at once to the wall of his chamber, and there where Jacopo remembered, and among the other writings, found there the thirteen missing cantos of the *Commœdia* :

GUIDO.—How wonderful and mysterious are the ways of life ; and the ways of death, how still more wonderful and mysterious. The great work of that sublime intellect shall not then remain incomplete, and yet we sorrow over him ; for though his great thoughts shall live after him, the brain that did conceive and give them life lies yonder, thoughtless and still in death. Come, beloved Grande and most dear Pier Giardino, and prepare to show honor to our beloved dead. His memory shall live—not Florence, but Ravenna shall give him worthy obsequies.

*(Exit Guido, Grande and Pier Giardino.)*

(CURTAIN)

L. of C.

## ACT III.

### SCENE III.—HALL OF PALACE OF GUIDO POLENTA.

*(Make ready for the Obsequies. Enter Funeral Cortège. Soldiers in armor. Mourners — servants. Music. Eulogy by Guido da Polenta.)*

All you that stand here sad, well may you weep for the noble Dante, whose soul is now, after its purification from its lightest sins, resting on the bosom of its God—face to face with that Eternal Beauty of which so oft he sang.—Never was there man more gifted—never mind more fully stored with wisdom of this earth and with wisdom Divine—for the eye of his intellect seemed to pierce the barriers of life into the regions of the unknown world. A heart pure and strong, that reflected the sinless beauty of his peerless Beatrice, and noble and true in its love of right and scorn of wickedness. In far distant future ages men will speak of him—read his verse—follow him in his sad journey through the realms of Hell, watch him climb the hills of Purgatorio, behold him soaring on the wings of thought into Paradise. The immortal Dante !

Of virtue he had so much  
That the body at death merited the crown poetical,  
And the soul went onward to a better life.  
Oh gentle spirit, oh true Dante,  
Veritably in the flesh beholding  
That glory, whither hath now gone forth  
Thy holy soul this day departed  
From the misery of this wandering throng.  
To thee whom, mindful of the faith and thy great virtue,  
I firmly hold to be at the foot of true Omnipotence,  
Do I commend myself.  
Here on this day Ravenna has thy body, and  
The Almighty Father thy soul.

*(Funeral Procession, Music.)*

(CURTAIN.)

## NOTANDA

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Page 10—Dante not only anticipated . . . . developments of Catholic teaching, but to an extraordinary degree reflected the teachings of St. Thomas. The student is referred to Ozanam's "Dante and Catholic Philosophy," where this fact is fully and beautifully developed.

Page 7—Read "equipped with an ardent temperament."

Page 9—Read "The circle, of those acting from" Simple Malice, is divided, etc.

The word "Trimmers" is taken not in the ordinary sense, but as signifying those who did neither evil nor good. "Mercy and Justice disdain them."

Page 31—"by the rood" read "by my word."

Page 33—"kind of scared" read "pretty well frightened now."

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Indebtedness is acknowledged to the translations of Dr. J. Carlyle, Charles Eliot Norton, Carey and Longfellow, and for several passages of the poem of H. Durand, the translations by Dean Plumptre, as well as to that of Hettinger's *Divina Commedia*, by H. S. Bowden, of the Oratory.

## BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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READING AND THE MIND,

McVey, Philadelphia.

SACRED SCENES AND MYSTERIES,

Longmans, Green & Co., New York.

RHETORIC AND ORATORY,

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Benziger Bros., New York.

CUNEIFORM INSCRIPTIONS,

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CHRIST, THE MAN GOD,

B. Herder & Company, St. Louis.



# "DANTE."

By Rev. J. F. X. O'Connor, S. J.

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## PRESS COMMENTS.

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### STUDENTS GIVE "DANTE" IN O'CONNOR'S VERSION.

"Before a large and deeply interested audience the initial production of the Rev. John F. X. O'Connor's play 'Dante' was given last evening by the students of St. Joseph's College, in the College Hall. Father O'Connor's version, which is designed to offset the impression of the life of the great Catholic poet as portrayed in the Sardou-Moreau drama, gives an adequate idea of the nobility of Dante's life. No character or event is included in the story which is not historical. All of the performers showed an intelligent conception of the exigencies of their roles, and gave a finished performance."—*North American*, May 2, 1904.

"'Dante' is a play written by the Rev. J. F. X. O'Connor, S. J., professor of the Dante class in St. Joseph's College. . . . Inspiration to create the play was provided Father O'Connor by the liberties taken in the historical, poetical and biographical material, which served Sardou and Moreau in their construction of the dramatized version of the great Catholic poet's life, as recently portrayed by Sir Henry Irving. . . . While scholars generally resented the injustice to the character of Dante in the Sardou-Moreau play, Catholics have, perhaps, felt the most keenly the extraordinary inspiration of the French playwrights upon the unimpeachable character of their hero, poet and statesman. . . . Father O'Connor's Dante, while not sensational, is designed by its author to bring out the real character of Dante as a citizen of Florence—in his love for Beatrice—in the visions of the Inferno and during his exile at Ravenna. Father O'Connor's text portrays a noble, high-minded poet, as revealed in his own words in the 'Divina Commedia' and Dante's other writings."—*The North American*.

"The Rev. J. F. X. O'Connor's new drama 'Dante' was given in the auditorium of St. Joseph's College to-night by the Dramatic Society. . . .

"His was the exact reverse of Sardou's characterization of Dante as an immoral and profligate man. In fact, the author said that the play was written largely with the object of counteracting the impression made by Sir Henry Irving's presentation.

"Father O'Connor's drama aims at portraying the chief events of the poet's career and of the Inferno.

"His Dante is the pure, reverential, high-minded, nobly-gifted Florentine as he appears to the student of his work. The play, which is in three acts, showed artistic merit of a high order, and at its conclusion the author was congratulated by some of the leading literary students of the city."—*N. Y. Herald*, May 2.

"The True Dante. The scholars of St. Joseph's College presented last evening a drama, 'Dante.' The play was written by Rev. J. F. X. O'Connor, S. J., professor of the Dante class, in collaboration with his pupils, and was intended to vindicate Dante from the slurs cast upon him by the Sardou-Moreau drama, in which Henry Irving recently appeared here. The college play aims at giving some idea of the true Dante. About 150 students took part in the performance, and some effective stage pictures were provided."—*The Public Ledger*.

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"'Dante,' a play written by Rev. John F. X. O'Connor, S. J., professor of the Dante class in St. Joseph's College, was witnessed by a large audience last evening in the college auditorium. . . . While not sensational Father O'Connor's interpretation gave an excellent idea of the nobility of character of the great Catholic poet. . . .

"Every effort had been made by the author to present the gifted Florentine in a more worthy light than has been done in the Sardou-Moreau play, the dramatized version of Dante's life as portrayed by Sir Henry Irving.

"The costumes, music and stage settings were features of the production, which reflected credit upon the author, the players and their instructors."—*The Philadelphia Press*.

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"Dante's production at St. Joseph's College differs from Sardou's. Father O'Connor's new drama 'Dante,' given in the auditorium of St. Joseph's College last night, portrayed the great epic poet in a light with which theatre goers were unfamiliar. It was the exact reverse of Sardou's characterization of Dante as an immoral and profligate man. In fact the author humbly said it was written largely with the object of contradicting the impression made by Sir Henry Irving's impersonation.

"Father O'Connor's Dante gives the high-minded, sad-storied, nobly-gifted Florentine as he appears to the student of his works.

"The play, in three acts, showed artistic merit of a high order." . . .  
*The Philadelphia Inquirer*.

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#### STUDENTS IN UNIQUE PLAY.

"A highly enjoyable rendition of an original play entitled 'Dante' was given last evening by the students of St. Joseph's College. . . . The play was unique in striving to portray the nobility of the character of the illustrious poet, by dealing particularly with the pathetic side of his career. The play was based strictly upon historical data, and included the important events of Dante's life and poem. The scenery and stage effects were particularly elaborate, all contributing to a highly successful performance."—*The Philadelphia Record*.

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#### DANTE.

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PRODUCTION BY ST. JOSEPH'S COLLEGE STUDENTS WAS A BRILLIANT SUCCESS.

The drama of "Dante," written and staged by J. F. X. O'Connor, was a phenomenal success. The performance on Monday night, May 2, for the patronesses was attended by a large and distinguished audience. The second performance, on Wednesday, May 4, was crowded to the doors. The "Dante" of Father O'Connor is classic in tone and of deep interest to the end. It grows upon one from opening to close, with the

exquisite tableau of Beatrice, pointing the way to heaven to Dante in the vision of the holy face of God. In the first act Conrad Williamson as "Dante" and Robert Kilduffe as Corso Donati, scored marked successes. The council scene was full of life and action, and two little Florentines, Theodore Town as Jacopo and Joseph Dougherty as Pietro, telling of the "visions of Dante," carried the audience by storm. The little dancers in their pretty scene also won much favor. In the second act Augustine Hardart as Beatrice in the Inferno and Joseph Dolan as Virgil were finished in their acting and in the interpretation of difficult scenes. The new scenes, designed by the author, the costumes, music and stage settings were features of the production which reflected credit upon the author, the players and their instructors.

In the third act the pathos of Dante in his exile and thoughts of Beatrice captivated the audience, while Can Grande and Pier Giardino, respectively Eugene Martin and Francis Hardart, made the scene one of great interest. The solemn obsequies of Dante at Ravenna, the funeral march and the eulogy of Guido da Polenta, personated by Joseph Fortescue, made a memorable picture, and the closing tableau reminded one of Cardinal Manning's saying: "Post Dantis paradisum nihil restat nisi visio Dei;" after the Paradise of Dante nothing remains but the vision of God.

Notable among the other characters was the sweet sympathy for Dante in his sorrow of Cino di Pistoia, by Joseph Rowan, who was so successful as Everyman; William Camblos as Rosse Della Torso, Stephen McTague as Lapo Gianni and Leo Gowan as Guido Cavalcanti. The enthusiasm of the audience was very marked.

Father O'Connor achieved success in his "Dante," where the Sardou-Moreau presentation by Irving failed. One explanation is that the Sardou-Moreau production was false to Dante, to history and to truth, while Father O'Connor's aim was fidelity to the noble character of Dante as we find him in his own writings, not a saint, but a noble, high-minded, great-souled poet, a loyal Catholic; not a reprobate, but a great gifted soul, and the greatest of poets worthy of the honor of the human race. Whatever the merits of Father O'Connor's "Dante," it has already been accepted by scholars, Danteists and lovers of Dante as not unworthy of him and a more acceptable representation than the other recent production. Another performance is looked forward to in the near future. Among the other illustrious patrons of the "Dante," besides the Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Ryan, Archbishop Farley, Bishop Prendergast and Cardinal Gibbons, is Charles Eliot Norton, the great Dante scholar and President of the Dante Society of Boston.—*The Standard and Times*.

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#### WALTER LITTLEFIELD ON THE SARDOU-MOREAU "DANTE."

Of the Sardou-Moreau "Dante", the *Critic* says, Christmas Number, 1903: "So far in his play-writing career, M. Sardou has employed two methods in writing his historico-romantic melodramas. He selects either an historical character and invents adventures for it or an historical episode and presents it with fictitious characters. . . . The wealth of things dug up, for the play called 'Dante' is so varied and so vast that, were it not for the title of the piece and the chief actor's profile, it would be difficult to discover the ulterior motive which had inspired the gathering together of so much interesting material. It is most unsatisfactory to speculate on what MM. Sardou and Moreau might have done.

"The love episode in 'La Vita Nuova' might have been placed upon the stage with much poetic charm . . . the political Dante offers another theme; Dante in exile another; while the poet's visions of Hell, Purgatory

and Heaven present a series of wonderful pictures which could be shown forth by modern stage mechanism with tremendous spectacular splendor. On the other hand, a patient attempt to get at the real Dante through a conscientious study of his life and works might . . . have resulted in a *dramatis persona* who, although placed in an entirely imaginative environment, would have been a gratifying illusion even to Danteists. But MM. Sardou and Moreau did none of these things. It was unnecessary. In the midst of their Dante researches they came upon a hitherto ignored or unsuspected episode in the life of the Florentine beside which the Beatrice affair becomes dull and uninteresting. It concerned the illicit love of the poet for Pia de Tolomei and the presence of their illegitimate daughter. No dramatist worthy of the name could have ignored such splendid possibilities. MM. Sardou and Moreau did not. They took the episode, fashioned it into a scenario, and then began to pile on local color and legendary and historical digression. Much of the color and many of the digressions hardly appeal to the Danteist at all." . . .

For the transporting the castle of the Gualandi from Pisa to the bank of the Arno—in the Francesca episode, the liberty taken in regard to time—the Malatesta Palace moved to Florence—the manipulation Polenta, Giotto, Elena di Svezia . . . and a grand inquisitor over two centuries before his time, these, says the critic "are equally annoying to the historian and the Danteist. Before attempting to account for this most extraordinary imposition—for it is nothing less (namely the main theme of the Sardou play)—it may be well to state a single illuminating historical fact: Dante had never met Pia di Tolomei until she introduced herself to him in Purgatory, eleven years after her death. The fact that Sardou has her clothed, although possibly not quite in her right mind, at Pisa, four years after her death, would of itself be unimportant in comparison with other painful intrusions, were it not for the rôle which the distinguished French playwright forces her to play. The relationship established by M. Sardou or M. Moreau, or both, between Dante and Pia di Tolomei and their supposed daughter, Gemma, does not only startle Danteists and fill with resentment intelligent Italians, but it has inflicted humiliation on a certain gentle old lady of Florence who, proud as descendant of the Tolomei, laments as something new and vivid the tragedy which took place on the Maremma marshes." . . .

How did M. Sardou get this idea of Gemma. A translation by M. Brizeux makes gemma, a gem, become Gemma. "But how poor and inadequate a thing seems the imagination, when we try to picture the scorn with which the shade of Dante must confront the shade of M. Brizeux in the nether world for such monstrous libel."

This criticism by Mr. Walter Littlefield, in the Christmas Number of the *Critic*, is a masterpiece of irony and sarcasm, through which we feel the pulsations of suppressed indignation. It is the feeling of all who have any idea of Dante, or knowledge of his works, or love for his character, and voices the indignation that must come from all who have understood the character of the Sardou-Moreau play. Father O'Connor's "Dante" pictures the poet in Dante's own words, and is the reverse of the idea of the Sardou-Moreau presentation. It gives an idea of Dante in Florence, his banishment, the visions of the *Inferno*, his exile at Ravenna, and of the love for him of the people of both Florence and Ravenna, and of the eulogy pronounced by Guido da Polenta. Whatever the other merits of the "Dante" of Father O'Connor, it will be accepted as a pleasing contrast by all scholars, Danteists, lovers of Dante, and by those who have read, even superficially, the "Divina Commedia." The good sense of an American audience drove the Sardou-Moreau play off the stage in a remarkably short time, even though supported by the reputation of Sir Henry Irving.



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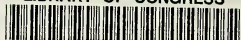
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